

10 April 1986

FILE ONLY

SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES GATES FOR CIA POST
BY ELIOT BRENNER
WASHINGTON

The man recommended for the No. 2 job at the CIA says covert actions are an "appropriate instrument of foreign policy," since the last decade has shown that diplomacy alone cannot resolve some situations.

Robert Gates, testifying at a rare open session of the Senate Intelligence Committee -- which later voted to recommend that the Senate confirm him as deputy director -- also said Thursday he is "pretty certain" the FBI is investigating recent leaks about Libyan terrorism.

The leaks probably were not deliberate "but the result of indiscipline on the part of individuals," he said.

"I'm pretty certain that some of the more significant leaks in the past few days have been reported to the FBI with a request that they investigate and if they haven't been, I'm sure that they will be," he said.

Gates, an analyst and administrator with no covert operations experience, would replace retiring CIA veteran John McMahon. He will be responsible for CIA operations and for assisting director William Casey with policy matters for the entire intelligence community.

Gates, who said the Soviet Union spends about \$4 billion yearly on covert operations, said the United States "faces a very complicated international environment," noting U.S.-backed resistance movements in Afghanistan and Nicaragua and the problem of terrorism.

"The experience of the last 10 years suggests that in many of these cases diplomacy alone is not an effective institution," he said. "That experience also would show that overt military action by the United States is either not appropriate or would not be supported by the American people or Congress.

"At that point the United States has two options, develop other instruments to carry out its policies or to turn and walk away.

"I believe that covert action is an appropriate instrument of foreign policy as long as it is undertaken in the context of a larger policy," he said.

There is "not an independent CIA foreign policy," he said. "The decision that is undertaken is a policy decision. The CIA is the instrument by which it is implemented. The CIA is obligated to implement it as effectively as possible."

On another policy matter, Gates agreed with Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, who said he was not satisfied the CIA had a "structure of accountability" for handling defectors.

The CIA suffered a major embarrassment last year when Soviet defector Vitaly Yurchenko walked away from a CIA officer at a Georgetown restaurant and appeared at the Soviet Embassy.

"There were organizational deficiencies. We have made organizational changes so that a single individual and organization are accountable for the entire process of defectors," said Gates.

Gates said the CIA does not want to restrict the freedom of defectors but "based on our experience, we perhaps ought to step back one step" and consider briefly detaining defectors so that "they just can't step out the door and walk into the Soviet Embassy."